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New 'Rightist' Organizer

By Peter Edson



THE man picked to organize the new right-wing Committee for the Co-Ordination of Conservative Effort is Edward Hunter. He is a former New York, Newark, New Orleans and Philadelphia newspaperman, foreign correspondent, lecturer and author of half a dozen books on international communism.

As a war correspondent he covered Hitler's advance into the Rhineland, the Japanese conquest of Manchuria, Spanish civil war, Italian conquest of Ethiopia. In World War II he served in the Office of Strategic Services, forerunner of CIA. He was a consultant on psychological warfare during and after the Korean War. Perhaps his greatest claim to fame is that he put the term "brain-washing" into the English language.

After interviewing American prisoners of war released by the Chinese communists in the Korean War he wrote two books, "Brain-Washing in Red China" and "Brain-Washing: The Story of the Men Who Defied It." They revealed the Red tortures of POWs and served as the basis for indoctrination courses to prepare American military personnel for communist cruelties under captivity.

After returning from his last overseas stint in Afghanistan three years ago, Mr. Hunter says he sensed a change in his country. Anti-communist sentiment had taken hold at the grass roots and was growing. He decided to work with this movement and he became a consultant to congressional committees investigating international communism.

His most recent claim to fame is that it was his testimony before the Senate Internal Security sub-committee last July which sparked the probe of muzzling military officers' speeches by Pentagon and State Department censors.

He moved to this area several months ago, with some misgivings. He says it is the first world crisis he has not

covered at the front. But he has a feeling now that the next "war" may be to save the United States from communism and that many of the battles will be fought here in Washington.

He has had no political background and only one previous experience in American anti-communist organizations. He headed a national committee which cleaned the commies out of the American Newspaper Guild.

Mr. Hunter is 60, of medium height and build, with a writer's rounded shoulders and quick movements. He speaks with energy and dedication. He is a high school graduate, described in Who's Who as "self-educated." He is a Methodist. He describes himself as "an old-fashioned liberal." He married a White Russian refugee, the former Tatiana Pestrikoff, in 1932. Their son served three years in the Marines.

At the recent meeting here of 100 representatives from rightist organizations, Mr. Hunter was given the job of naming the new Committee for the Co-Ordination of Conservative Effort. He intends to select members from the top 200 out of the total of 2000 right-wing organizations and leaders. He has no idea now how large his permanent committee will be.

His idea is that he will establish no office of his own, other than his Arlington, Va., apartment. He would like to use the facilities of some of the 50 or more right-wing groups that have their national headquarters or offices here.

Mr. Hunter says he has been given no money with which to operate and his own income from royalties, lecture and consultant's fees is not sufficient to carry the expense.

Before the first formal meeting of his committee, now scheduled for June, he hopes to have ready budget estimates of what it will cost to operate and recommendations for the stipends to be paid a permanent staff.